When Children Walked the Earth

Chapter 4

Power of The Christian Home — Love your Children

For Michelle Washburn

Because the leaders of every government in history use the Father-child analogy to explain their power over the people and the people's obligation to submit, they admit that the story of humanity up until now has been the story of Children walking the earth guided by a few father figures.

But from the beginning it was not so. Authoritarian government was and is God's provision to a hard hearted world bent on rebellion and that world and the root of its rebellion has been forever transformed in the work of Jesus Christ.

The world has changed because God's law, its inescapable design in all creation and man in particular, no longer needs governments of men to enforce it externally on people hopelessly incapable of obedience from the heart. Because God came in human form, and because He paid the price of our hard hearts and gave us living hearts. And because he lives in us by the Holy Spirit, it is now possible to think of self-government by that law written on the heart. Not sinless but finally, from the center of our being, our direction in life is shaped by God's Spirit. This is not a technical theological change. It is the reality of the New Creation. Do you believe Paul meant what he told the Corinthians in Chapter 5,

> *17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

Specifically the world has changed for all the governments of the earth including the family. So let's review the first two family issues briefly and look at how the Good News of Jesus Christ, His Incarnation, His Cross and Pentecost have made it possible to really love our children.[1]

In Chapter 3 we saw that the aspect of the family that rulers focus on is the incompetence of the child to get along without a firm hand. The child cannot feed himself, clothe himself, relieve himself, clean himself, heal himself without a Father there to instruct the child's mother in how

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[1] Romans 2:5; Mark 8:17; Hebrews 3:13; Jeremiah 31:33 I will put my law in your hearts and give you a heart of flesh to replace your heart of stone; Ezekiel 36:26 I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh; Hebrews 7:10; Mark 10:5 because of the hardness of your hearts;

to do it for him. Voila, the leader and his bureaucrats are there for you the incompetent child.

In that chapter I did not dispute the legitimacy of the analogy for two reasons.

1) It is accurate: rebellious humanity had reduced their heart to a childish incapacity to care for themselves without the destructive rape and riot of anarchy. God provided authoritarian governance in society and the home until what he had planned from the Garden, could be restored in Christ Jesus.

2) The second reason the analogy is legitimate is even after Christ, because external force can be necessary to care for and protect the incompetent such as children. But God's purpose for Fatherhood is not to be the external force for feeding, cleaning, doctoring, and giving purpose to children. The main purpose of Fatherhood is to produce in 12-15 years adults capable of morally directing their lives in all these rudimentary areas and more, to take dominion of the Earth as God designed them to. When Christ restored God's original purpose in the family Fatherhood, Patriarchy, as understood by the provision He made for fallen mankind isn't the full picture of what he had planned, but only the shadow for family authority.

When Kings and Priests do not faithfully structure their power and authority to rule over ethically and Spiritually Mature men and women of sound judgment they failed, because even for the best and noblest of reasons, they make permanent the state of childish helplessness. The children/congregation/citizens learn to fear the responsibility of adulthood, and they too clamor for more chains, more protection, more care. They do this out of compassion believing that it is Christian to keep the elite in power and the people in a codependent relationship with them because that is the only loving way to be sure people are cared for. The elders told Moses, what today's Elders tell us: Slavery in Egypt does have its advantages.

In Christ, the world has changed. The Lord's Supper in the Upper Room was the Exodus Passover meal leading His people out of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage to the very structure of Authoritarian Government itself.

So we came to Chapter 3 and I realized that before I could turn to how to love our children, we had to listen to Paul and learn how God's pattern of the Garden is restored for the parents.

Genesis 3:16 implies a struggle: "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." It isn't just the rebellion of the woman, the man was as much a rebel, it was a punishment to both of them to rule or to be ruled in a way neither was created or designed to do. To heal this we need to see the situation with Garden Eyes.

Like children playing Grown up it is hard to understand what maturity means. So we try to twist everything through the lense of authoritarian government thinking all Jesus wanted to do was make it kind and compassionate instead of tyrannical and harsh, rather than accepting that from the beginning it was not so whether kind or harsh.

This is why all ways of putting the question, "who is in charge?" presuppose that marriage is a struggle of a man and a woman because at all times someone must be in charge, which one? So we imagine ways to work out a co rule or just put the man in charge etc. instead of coming back to the text of Scripture itself we wisely know what God must have meant and fit his words into what He surely should have said.

But just look at the word Jesus spoke, first in the Garden and then repeated to the Disciples and at the time they didn't get it . . . but Paul did. Jesus said, "the two shall become **one flesh**."

The family is not to be ruled by two rulers. There is no issue to resolve of who is in charge. Only **ONE** is in charge of the children. In the Christian home, there is no one else to be in charge of but children.

When you see Paul's follow up to Jesus it should be clear. Jesus said, "from the beginning the two become one flesh." And then Paul rejects an authority structure between the two and simply says the wife submits to the husband the husband dies for the wife. Take off your "someone has to be in charge" glasses and see what is in front of your face on the page of Scripture: There is only one parent in two persons.

The Incarnation by introducing us to a being who can be 100% God and 100% man introduced God's people to one of the most amazing realities of God and that is that He can be 100% Three and 100% One at the same time without losing identity or unity, or communication, or purpose, or direction.

Should it surprise you that the mystery of salvation reflects the same mystery found in divine Being of God? As an individual, you can be fully united to Christ yet the "You," is not lost in "Oneness with Christ".

Christ and His Church are the unity of Believers with God that preserves and makes meaningful their individual reality.

And that is marriage. One being rules the family in two persons. The Two become one Flesh, and "this is the Mystery of Christ and His Church." These are the words of Jesus Christ, the two shall become One Flesh, let not the philosophies and traditions of men tear them apart.

The Incarnation is the first lesson for raising children — The word of God written on stone becomes the word of God revealed in Flesh as God had always intended, is the foundation of God's plan for the Family. Concretely this day of the word become flesh began on Conception Day when God took his first step in His Human life-walk from a single cell forward to His death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven

where he rules History to this day. You can be confident that the One who walked where you now stand, is walking with you through the joys and sorrows of being One Flesh and raising your children as two persons. After all he was God and Man. He is the Image of the Unseen God, and so are a man and his wife.

Therefore, the most important thing is being One Parent to your children in a way that doesn't compromise the individuality of what a Man and a Woman bring to the table as two different genders, nor does it do damage to what the particular personality or particular character traits of the man in contrasted with those of the woman. They are vital to your union and he wants them in one flesh, all of those traits and gifts grown to all they can be — after all you are the living example for your children of the incarnation of God's word on your heart so you demonstrate how to be the most you can be in Christ.

Talk about this together, I don't know how you will work this mystery out. I will suggest a few things that I see from where I sit, but you are the ones who are working out your salvation with each other as you apply your walk in the incarnate Christ to your walk in each other.

1) "I am For the Holy Spirit!" "No, I belong to Jesus!" "No, it's Father-God whom I serve!" As if there is some foolish advantage or benefit of one over the other. There is no place for playing children against the other parent. Trust God to work through even the things you don't like about your wife or husband and their influence on the children. Don't give your children room to think that you are running a guerilla war against your spouse. You are not made closer to your children by "being honest with them" and sharing your frustration with the other's weaknesses (real or imagined). Of course, work on these issues with each other, but do it the way the Father, Son and Holy Spirit might work on issues, surely there is something they talk about? Talk about it that way.

2) Obviously there is no room for your children ever thinking that they can play one of you against the other. When this happens, remember the sorrow Jesus had when His disciples — those closest to Him — just didn't get it. Jesus says, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"[2] When your children play one against the other if you have built your relationship with them you can ask them (which I'll talk about in a minute), "How long have you knows me and Mom? When you talk to Mom you are talking to Me!" The Mom says the same thing, "When you talk to me you are talking to Dad. Why would you treat us as if we weren't married or weren't your parents?" OK, don't get me wrong, there may be times when you take the Psalm 94 approach with them, and say, "Understand, you brutish among the people: and you fools, when will you be wise? Dad and I are married! We are One Flesh. Don't go playing us like a fool!" You need wisdom. But if you ask He will in that hour give it to you. What? you think that promise was just for going to trial or getting sentenced to the colosseum

[2] John 14:9, Mark 6:52; 8:12-17; Matthew 16:11-12.

something? No! it is for you on whom the ends of the ages have come. There they are your children whom you are discipling. They are the ends of the ages. They begin the age that is to come you are bringing an end to the age that was. Discipleship is making that connection heart to heart.

The second lesson of raising children is the Cross — the day of atonement, redemption and transformation, the day that God paid the price of our sin and rebellion. He redeemed his people giving them a heart of flesh just like His.

I would say this is the most obvious, except once these things are suggested, they are all obvious. Raising children is the most important thing you could ever do, to be directly faithful to the Creation Mandate — your design and purpose statement — and the clearest expression of the Person and Redemption of Jesus Christ. History is the unfolding in the flesh and in history, of the Word of God's Grace and God's Redemption and God's presence. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." Is a statement that comprehends every moment of your life as it plays its role in bringing creation to its Grand Conclusion.

So of course, child rearing is all about atonement. It is all about suffering service on the behalf of a child who literally has no way they can possibly appreciate all you do for them to the end that they become self-governing expressions of God's law. God's Epistle to the world.

1) The Cross does not so much address ***what*** you do — The Cross is obvious to any parents who stay up all night with a new born, or all night with a sick child not knowing what the morning will bring, or all night finishing a child's project or presentation, or all night wondering when they will get home. That's not even the tip of the iceberg of all you lay down. Your service is the foundation of your authority in your child's life. When you lay down your life for your children, you are discipling the nations that will spring from their loins.

2) The Cross addresses your vision in the midst of what you do: "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2 It is the meaning of our existence. You lay down your life for these children in a thousand ways. Therefore you build the foundation to make credible all you have to teach.

3) The Cross is the beginning of your sex education with your children. NO! No I don't mean you teach it verbally to them as they grow up, as if to say, "See all I do for you? Its so you can have good sex with whoever you marry!" Well in a sense that is true. But it is better than that. By the time they get to where it is appropriate to discuss sex, you will already have taught them everything they need to know about sex that really matters. All that's left is the details. In our culture today, the Church is facing a crisis of sexuality because with the sterilized modern world it abandoned the relevance of the Cross to everyday life. Serving those you love is what gives you the authority in their life for you to be

heard, honored and obeyed. As you live this out with them, when you discuss the place of sex they will understand that it is the ultimate ministry you offer to the one you join to disciple the generations who are depending on you to be faithful. I'll say more on this later when we discuss the Holy Spirit. (Yeah you heard me, the Holy Spirit is the heart of Sex Ed., Service is just its foundation.)

4) The Cross is where you were made someone who can receive and act on the things of God. And this is what you are laboring for in your children, to be used of God to write His law on their heart to become what Adam and Eve short-circuited in the garden — people who are invited by God to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to partake of it as mature adults enjoying the fruit of embracing the Good and rejecting the Evil. And in doing so being invited to the Tree of Life. It's God's story acting out, what all of us must be in order to grow up, we must have the law of God at heart, and the Good judgment to apply it. This is the Goal of Parenting, it is the fruit of the cross which combines the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil into one tree. A new heart ruled by God's law is the purpose of Redemption it is the Purpose of the Parents. Man and wife as sexual beings can truly be parents who disciple the Earth.

Finally the third lesson of raising children is Pentecost — the day of inspiration, of infilling, when God personally came to dwell in the human sanctuaries he had created, redeemed, transformed and now in-dwells.

The Holy Spirit is God assuring us that History belongs to Him and with that general truth the particular truth for you, your personal history belongs to Him. He is going somewhere with you. He formed you in the Garden and brought you forth at just the right time to redeem you, and fill you with His presence and finish writing God's word on your heart.

1) So now let's go back to sex ed. Explaining how is simple. But as a child of the modern Church you believe we are under grace not law, so is there a reason not to enjoy sex recreationally? As a Child of the Church your traditional reasons for abstaining — disease, pregnancy and intimacy have been resolved. God's law thunders impotently to the modern Christian, God's grace says, "Why not just chill and enjoy God's gift of sex as He grants opportunity?" The reason is, the Bible NEVER discusses sex in this way. First, the Bible presents sex as the "literal" part of transforming the world. There in the first words God spoke to Adam and Eve he said literally, "have lots of kids and take care of the whole earth with them." Figuratively we talk about fruitful labors, fruitful art, we talk about multiplying the good things cultures can do etc. But kick yourself in the shin, Feel some real world! Get off your cloud. It's time to be literal! Raise your children to know the purpose of life, the generational plan of God, the fact that Abraham and Sarah, Adam and Eve, Your great grandparents, even Jesus, all experienced the reality that until the future happened they were just like you, they were the end of the line the end of the ages but the line wasn't ending the new age was beginning

. . . in 400 years they were tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions. You too are the Father and Mother of Generations. Discipleship is a metaphor taken from the reality of what Parents do with their children, not the other way around. Show them that raising them is the most important wonderful thing in your life, and when it comes time to talk about sex you will have already built into their lives the Biblical reason for fulfilling their wife and husband and discipling the next generation. God has someone for you, like God had a tree of life for Eve and Adam. Hang your future on that tree, God Hung your future on His tree the Cross so that you could.

2) Jesus said those unbelievable words in the upper room, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. (John 16:7) Wait, what could be better than hanging out with Jesus? But Jesus wanted nothing to do with the Codependent rule of the Pagan and Gentile world. *It is better that I am on my own*? John the Baptist said the same thing, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The independence of Jesus Brethren is the purpose of His ministry. The independence of your children is the purpose of all your discipline, love and interaction. **Independent**, the way Jesus raised you to be independent. No! no! No! not independent of God's law written on your heart, independent of needing someone to force you to understand it and do it. In His case he gives you the Holy Spirit. In your case you impart to them your vision. What you give your children that dwells with them and with their children "and their children's children for 1000 generations of those who love me and keep my commandments," is patterned after the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Ok still not convinced? Jesus went on to say, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and **they will do even greater things than these**, because I am going to the Father." Jesus was post-millennial too! And right after that he talks about giving them the Holy Spirit. This is how Pentecost is about teaching your children how to grow up, what to grow into. This is their legacy in Christ received from your parenting. *Don't let the elders of the Church, or the kings of the earth steal it from them and try to convince them that they will always be children with Father-elders, and Father-kings even you their human father to rule over them.* Co-dependency is a lie of the world, it is not God's plan for government at any level. Raising children to be retarded as a matter of authoritarian purpose is not what God planned from the beginning.

3) But how? What do I do? What to do is easy. God made you for this task. It's just that doing it is very difficult and it isn't until you've done the wrong thing that you realize you knew it all along. I'll list a few,

a- Things are doing well? Now! Go do something with them that they want to do with you. Depending on the age, it will vary.

b- Don't let the discipline time be more than 5% of the time you spend with them. The more time you spend doing things that engage children, the more the corrections will draw you together rather than drive you apart.

c- It is so easy to want that free time so badly that you minimize your contact to , "What NOW!?" "STOP THAT!" Suddenly you realize this is 90% of your contact

d- Find things to do that force you to take weekend road trips, Travel teams are great for this. Research where you are going and pick two or three fun things to do together.

e- Look them in the eye when times are good. The Holy Spirit is there looking you in the eye, during those times you are looking your child in the eye and tell him a thing or two. You will be surprised at what God says back if you listen. You have no problem looking children in the eye for discipline . . . but honestly far too many times it is a power play. "I have power, you don't, look me in the eye! Admit it I am the greatest!" "I have the moral high ground you have sinned! Look me in the eye! I control you because you are too dumb, weak, immoral to control yourself. Look me in the eye when I talk to you boy!" Now, the fact is that last part is true. God has given you control because they cannot control themselves they are weaker, not as great, immoral etc. But this isn't your victory, this moment is your failure. You failed to use that superior knowledge, ethical judgment, and strength in the years prior in a way that would bring him to a sufficient level of moral and intelligent strength to not need whatever it is you are giving him by way of correction. Why are you triumphing over him? If he had the maturity and knowledge to say it, he could say right back to you: "Look me in the eye dad, you have failed me again. I am weak because your strength didn't strengthen me it either ignored me or beat me down. That is not why God gave you strength or moral greatness over me, so look me in the eye and realize your failure before God!" Would you keep looking him in the eye as your child fears to look at you and so you command it? The Holy Spirit has that way about Him. Right when we thought we had it figured out!

Man that was intense, that accelerated quickly. Look, all I'm saying is, lots of eye contact when it's fun and affirming.

f- You can't say this enough, "You know what I like about you, . . . !" at times when nothing is going on that makes it sound phony. Think of five things a day when all is well to look them in the eye and from the bottom of your heart tell them things you love about them. Look you can think of a lot more that I could suggest, it is time to start communing in the Parent-head that Great Image of the Unseen God and with your wife or husband think of how you can build up your child. The rod is for the back of fools.

This is the end of the world as we know it. It is the beginning of the New World.

You have been recreated a new Creature in that New World.

So remember your basic theology it is your key to practical living.

It is the beginning of the world as He is making it through us and as you disciple your children to disciple theirs you are touching the minds and hearts of millions to the close of the age.